

# Moldova

by Victor Gotișan

*Capital: Chișinău*  
*Population: 3.553 million*  
*GNI/capita, PPP: US\$5,350*

Source: World Bank *World Development Indicators*.

## Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
National Democratic Governance	5.75	5.75	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.75	5.75
Electoral Process	3.75	4.00	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Civil Society	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Independent Media	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Local Democratic Governance	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75	5.00
Corruption	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00
<b>Democracy Score</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5.07</b>	<b>5.14</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.82</b>	<b>4.86</b>	<b>4.86</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.93</b>

NOTE: The ratings reflect the consensus of Freedom House, its academic advisers, and the author(s) of this report. If consensus cannot be reached, Freedom House is responsible for the final ratings. The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The Democracy Score is an average of ratings for the categories tracked in a given year. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The appointment of a new government, presidential elections, and continued fallout from the 2014 “billion-dollar theft” scandal in the banking industry dominated 2016 in Moldova. At the beginning of the year, the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), led by the unpopular oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc, was able to consolidate its control over governing institutions despite widespread protests. Although civil society objections and demonstrations led by the “Dignity and Truth” civic platform prevented Plahotniuc himself from becoming prime minister, PDM was able to secure the nomination of Pavel Filip, a former minister of information technologies and communications and reportedly a close Plahotniuc associate. The new government was installed in January during an undisclosed, late-night ceremony and only later confirmed by a press release from the president’s office. This left the premiership and speaker of parliament positions in the hands of PDM, an unusual concentration of power for a party that placed fourth in the last parliamentary elections in 2014.

On entering office, the Filip government not only had to stabilize the political situation and win back public trust but also gain the confidence of Moldova’s international partners, whose financial support is crucial for the country’s economic survival. Consequently, the government drafted a Priority Reform Action Roadmap with key measures to adopt from March to July 2016. The government’s commitment to swiftly undertake a series of complex reforms that had been postponed for several years was intended to demonstrate its decisiveness, but it achieved only partial implementation. At the end of the five-month period, a monitoring report by local think tanks found that only slightly more than half (55 percent) of the pledged reforms were achieved without deficiencies, 28 percent were achieved with deficiencies, and about 17 percent were not achieved. The most significant overdue actions were the reform of the National Anticorruption Center (NAC) and adoption of a new Broadcasting Code. The investigation into the 2014 billion-dollar bank fraud and reform of the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) also continued to drag, and the government failed to sign a new electricity supply contract with more favorable terms.

In 2016, mass media remained under political control, clearly visible during the presidential campaign when media institutions were preoccupied with polishing candidates’ images rather than informing the public. The law on media ownership transparency enacted in November 2015 requires owners to disclose their identities, but complementary provisions on transparency of media funding still have yet to be adopted. The advertising market remained monopolized in 2016.

Civil society was active throughout the year pressing social and political issues, such as the billion-dollar fraud; the closed trials of former prime minister Vlad Filat, controversial businessman Veaceslav Platon, and Orhei mayor Ilan Shor; and the appointment of compromised individuals to key positions in law enforcement bodies. Civil society input was seldom taken into account, however, and the parliament and government continued to drag their feet on laws and mechanisms that would improve cooperation with the civil sector. The protest movement initiated in 2014 by “Dignity and Truth” continued its demonstrations in central Chişinău until March 2016, when a ruling of the Constitutional Court restored the former mechanism of direct presidential elections instead of indirect parliamentary vote, meeting one of the civic platform’s key demands. The parliament set 30 October as the date for the presidential elections, and protest leaders refocused their agenda on engaging in the presidential campaign.

Judicial reform also proceeded slowly in 2016. The appointment procedure for judges and key officials continued to be a source of concern, especially in terms of candidates’ integrity. At the same time, intimidation of judges who do not conform to political orders also posed a problem. The most prominent example was judge Domnica Manole who faced criminal proceedings after ruling in April that the Central Electoral Commission’s refusal to organize a constitutional referendum as petitioned by “Dignity and Truth” had been illegal. Several law packages and initiatives were adopted, including a law on the prosecution and reforms of the NAC and National Integrity Commission (NIC), but most of these

will either enter into force in 2017 or their implementation and enforcement are being stalled to preserve political influence over the institutions concerned.

In 2016, Moldova's banks remained fragile in the aftermath of the billion-dollar fraud scandal. At year's end, three banks (Moldova Agroindbank, Moldindconbank, and Victoriabank) were still under the monitoring of the NBM. Sergiu Cioclea was appointed the new governor of the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) in April, pledging to do his best to achieve stability in the banking sector and try to recover the stolen billion, "even if it is very difficult to do."<sup>1</sup>

For the first time since 2000, the president of Moldova was elected directly in a two-round process in the fall. In the second round in November, the pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) defeated the pro-European Maia Sandu, the candidate of Action and Solidarity Party, also supported by "Dignity and Truth" and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM). Dodon earned 52.11 percent of the votes against Sandu's 47.89 percent. His victory was attributed mainly to his promises to improve economic relations with Russia as well as anti-Europe rhetoric. However, it remained unclear whether he would succeed in improving economic relations with Russia given the relatively limited powers of the president. At the same time, his rhetoric could contribute to the worsening of relations with the European Union (EU).

### **Score Changes:**

- **Judicial Framework and Independence rating declined from 4.75 to 5.00** due to intimidation of judges who are not in line with the political agenda, lack of reforms to ensure integrity in the appointment of judges, and the politicized decision of the Constitutional Court that preempted a popular mobilization in favor of direct presidential elections.

**As a result, Moldova's Democracy Score declined from 4.89 to 4.93.**

**Outlook for 2017:** The year 2017 will be decisive for the Republic of Moldova. After the presidential elections, the government now must implement the most important reforms related to justice, fighting corruption, adoption of the legal framework for the media sector, and stabilizing the banking industry and economy in the face of persistent unemployment and declining remittances. Vladimir Plahotniuc's Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) is in control of the policy agenda, and early parliamentary elections could lead to a reconfiguration of the political scene as several parliamentary parties at year's end polled below the threshold.

The government, and especially PDM, will likely lobby for modifying the Electoral Code by adopting a uninominal or mixed electoral system in order to gain an advantage during the next parliamentary elections. The presidency has no new powers, but his direct election may allow President Dodon to project his agenda onto the public and state institutions. Relations with the EU will stagnate, at best, and could see a downturn if Dodon pursues his anti-European agenda. The president promised to work at improving relations with Russia by negotiating better market access for Moldovan goods and Moldovan workers in Russia.

# MAIN REPORT

## National Democratic Governance

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
5.75	5.75	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.75	5.75

- The controversial appointment of a new government headed by Pavel Filip in January ended a three-month deadlock after the dismissal of the previous Valeriu Streleț cabinet due to allegations of corruption.<sup>2</sup> Filip was seen as a compromise between President Nicolae Timofti and a slim majority coalition in the parliament, after the president had blocked the appointment of Vladimir Plahotniuc, a controversial politician and then-president of the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM).<sup>3</sup> The Filip government proposed an ambitious roadmap<sup>4</sup> to fight corruption, reform the justice sector and the prosecutor's office, restart negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), guarantee independence of the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), and bring to justice those accountable for the massive bank fraud in 2014. However, the majority of reforms stipulated in the Priority Reform Action Roadmap had not been achieved by year's end, underscoring the argument that the government's show of willingness only served to secure IMF funding and gain public legitimacy.
- In fall 2016, direct presidential elections took place in Moldova for the first time since 2000. In the second round of the elections on 13 November, Igor Dodon (Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, PSRM) won with 52.11 percent of the ballots against 47.89 percent for Maia Sandu (Action and Solidarity Party, supported by Dignity and Truth civic platform and Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PLDM).<sup>5</sup> Dodon is pro-Russian in his outlook, and although the presidency's role in setting policy is limited, he is expected to seek greater engagement with Russia at the expense of relations with the European Union (EU).<sup>6</sup>
- The presidential campaign was perhaps the dirtiest in Moldovan political history, marked by partisanship, divisiveness, and personal attacks among the candidates. Old ethno-linguistic divisions, misogyny, manipulated and false information, homophobia, and geopolitical fearmongering were perpetuated via controlled and biased media outlets. The Orthodox Church played a significant role in this campaign, publicly backing Igor Dodon and questioning Maia Sandu's faith as well as sexual orientation<sup>7</sup> despite legal provisions restricting the church from involvement in politics.<sup>8</sup> According to opinion polls, the Orthodox Church is the most trusted institution in Moldova with approximately 80 percent approval.<sup>9</sup>
- Two years after the "billion-dollar theft," the situation of Moldova's banking industry remained very fragile. During the year, three banks (Moldova Agroindbank, Moldindconbank, and Victoriabank) were still under NBM monitoring with no resolution of their management problems. The newly appointed governor of NBM pledged to do his best to achieve stability in the banking sector and to recover the stolen billion dollars, "even if it is very difficult to do."<sup>10</sup> In September, the government pushed through (over civil society protests and with little public consultation) a package of seven laws<sup>11</sup>, including one to convert the failed loans into public debt and pay it with a 5-percent interest rate over 25 years. Following the law's passage, the IMF approved a three-year loan program of \$180 million.<sup>12</sup>
- On 1 July 2016, the Association Agreement between Moldova and the EU fully entered into force. The agreement includes creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) intended to boost EU-Moldova trade and open a larger market for Moldovan products. Data from the European Commission show that, since 2014, Moldovan exports to EU markets have increased two- to fourfold in the case of certain products.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Moldova has been unable to make full use of the quotas for several agricultural commodities due to strict EU standards.<sup>14</sup> A recent report by the European Court of Auditors revealed that Moldova receives the highest amount of EU aid per

inhabitant among all of the EU’s eastern neighbors, mainly in the form of budgetary support.<sup>15</sup> In March, the government announced that conditions to restart the negotiations for settling the Transnistrian conflict had been met. The 5+2 negotiations were interrupted in 2014, and contact between the conflicting sides had declined in recent years. In June 2016, negotiations reopened under Germany’s presidency of the OSCE, with a signed protocol stipulating the joint approach to a number of practical issues for relations between the sides, including recognition of university diplomas and vehicle license plates.<sup>16</sup>

## Electoral Process

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3.75	4.00	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

- On 23 June, the parliament approved amendments to the electoral code regulating the election of the country’s president.<sup>17</sup> The new amendments reinstated the provisions in effect before 2000, with some changes to suit present-day norms. Among other changes, the amendments reduced the campaign period from three to two months,<sup>18</sup> made registration requirements more stringent,<sup>19</sup> and required that the president give up party membership.<sup>20</sup> According to Promo-LEX, a nongovernmental election-monitoring organization, the legal framework—while approved hastily with certain ambiguities and gaps in regulation—allowed for democratic elections.<sup>21</sup>
- The first round of elections on 30 October included nine candidates. Though no candidate cleared 50 percent, Igor Dodon of PSRM and Maia Sandu of Action and Solidarity Party advanced to the next round.<sup>22</sup> The second round between Sandu and Dodon was held on 13 November, and Dodon won with 52.11 percent of the vote.<sup>23</sup> In Gagauzia, Dodon won practically all votes (98.89 percent),<sup>24</sup> and according to some experts, this was decisive for his victory. The 67,000 who voted for him in this autonomous region represent more than 4 percent of the total turnout, exactly the difference between the two candidates.<sup>25</sup>
- One of the biggest surprises of the campaign was the withdrawal of PDM candidate Marian Lupu just three days before the elections. Lupu, standing with Vladimir Plahotniuc, announced his decision in a press conference, adding that PDM would support Maia Sandu in the elections.<sup>26</sup> Many described this support as a “kiss of Judas,”<sup>27</sup> hurting more than helping Sandu given Plahotniuc’s unpopularity. Sandu herself said that Lupu’s withdrawal was a “desperate gesture confirming that Dodon is the desired candidate of Vladimir Plahotniuc.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, according to media monitoring organizations, the outlets owned by Plahotniuc presented Dodon in a neutral light, while waging a massive campaign against Sandu. In addition, there were cases where PDM activists campaigned for the PSRM candidate.<sup>29</sup>
- While the election monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) concluded that the presidential election in Moldova was competitive and showed respect for fundamental freedoms,<sup>30</sup> there were still troubling cases of voter manipulation and electoral fraud. The main conclusion of Promo-LEX’s report was similar,<sup>31</sup> pointing out the misuse of administrative resources, restrictions on citizen’s ability to cast their votes, as well as the negative campaign.
- The election saw an unusually high number of votes from Moldovan citizens residing in Transnistria. According to numerous media reports, there was a concerted effort to bribe and bus people from Transnistria into Moldova proper to vote for Dodon.<sup>32</sup> Around 20,000 Transnistrians voted in 2016 compared to almost no participation in previous elections. This mobilization effort would have been impossible without the explicit approval of the pro-Russian Transnistrian authorities.<sup>33</sup> Some voters from Transnistria confirmed on camera that it was Transnistrian leader Yevgeny Shevchuk who mobilized them.<sup>34</sup>

- Another voting issue related to “dead souls.” In early September, investigative journalism outlet RISE Moldova analyzed a list of 300 deceased persons and reported that 100 names were included in the election lists of the State Registry of Voters (SRV).<sup>35</sup> Shortly thereafter, the CEC issued a press release confirming the problem and announced an internal control procedure to check the register.<sup>36</sup>
- More than twice as many Moldovans living abroad voted compared to the parliamentary elections in 2014. This occurred despite a limited number of polling stations opened by the Moldovan government abroad, even though the CEC had received clear signals that the diaspora turnout would be higher.<sup>37</sup> In at least 11 polling stations abroad,<sup>38</sup> there were not enough ballots for all who came to vote.<sup>39</sup> As a result, some candidates and civil society members called for a change in the electoral code that would allow for more people voting per station, and they demanded the resignation of the CEC and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) for not foreseeing and solving this issue in advance.<sup>40</sup> The CEC was also blamed for limiting journalists’ access to public information pertaining to the election process and candidates registered in presidential elections.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court confirmed the election results on 13 December and validated the mandate of Igor Dodon as the new president of Moldova.<sup>42</sup>

## Civil Society

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3.75	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25

- Civil society organizations (CSOs) play an important role in Moldovan public life. In 2016, over 700 new organizations were founded, raising the country’s official total to 11,086 (though some are not functional).<sup>43</sup> Despite the high number of CSOs and level of activism, the government continually ignores civil society. While more open to civil initiatives in 2016, the government’s actual policies were not impacted by public discussions or civil sector demands, such as calls for an open hearing in the case of those accused in the banking industry’s “billion-dollar theft.”
- Massive protests initiated by the “Dignity and Truth” civic platform in 2015 declined in 2016 and almost completely stopped after the Constitutional Court’s March decision, which undercut the platform by fulfilling protesters’ demand for the direct election of the president. While Dignity and Truth collected around 400,000 signatures supporting a referendum on the issue, the CEC rejected the signatures on technical grounds in April.<sup>44</sup> The court and CEC decisions, combined with the arrest of several protesters as well as rising apathy among the Moldovan population, gradually eroded Dignity and Truth’s capacity to mobilize for further protests.
- The regulatory framework for CSOs has improved slowly and with great difficulty, as the government appears to consciously delay drafting and voting on initiatives proposed by organizations. In March 2016, the Ministry of Economy published a draft law on social entrepreneurship followed by a note announcing public consultations. The law would allow nongovernmental organizations to generate income and consolidate their financial situation, but no further action was taken during the year.<sup>45</sup> In September, the ministry held public consultations about a new draft regulatory framework, but no law had been adopted by year’s end. One important bill, however, was passed during the year. The so-called 2-percent law, adopted in July, grants taxpayers the right to redirect 2 percent of their income tax to CSOs and religious organizations for funding purposes.<sup>46</sup>
- In its 2015–18 action plan, the government made cooperation with CSOs a priority, even though it had previously failed to implement its promises in this area.<sup>47</sup> One evaluation found that only 27 percent of commitments in the 2012–15 Civil Society Development Strategy (CSDS) were achieved.<sup>48</sup> In August, due to the joint efforts of Legal Resources Center Moldova (LRCM) and several other CSOs, the government adopted a new regulation that requires consulting civil society in the public decision-making process.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, all public documents are now subject to public

consultation at least 15 days in advance of their adoption, and local and central authorities must publish information of public interest in a transparent and accessible way on their websites. The regulation also obligated the government to create a special task unit to coordinate and facilitate cooperation with CSOs, to set up a dedicated phone line to inform them on policymaking, and publish an annual report as to how new regulations are put into practice in the field.

## Independent Media

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

- The media sector is still one of the most influential pillars in Moldovan society, ranking only behind the Orthodox Church and mayors in terms of public trust.<sup>50</sup> However, trust in media has been dropping: In 2014, about 60 percent of the population had high trust in the media, whereas by April 2016 only 42 percent of respondents said the same. This change is due mainly to the politicization and concentration of outlets in the hands of oligarchs as well as their struggle for dominance fought through the media.<sup>51</sup>
- Politicization and concentration remained among the biggest problems during the year. The 2015 amendments on media ownership transparency have proved inadequate because they fail to address transparency in financing.<sup>52</sup> Data released by the Broadcasting Coordinating Council (BCC) showed that over 80 percent of TV stations are owned by Moldovan politicians or people close to political parties. In fact, Vladimir Plahotniuc owns about 70 percent of Moldova’s television market.<sup>53</sup> Concentration based on political criteria has led to a decrease in the pluralism of opinion<sup>54</sup> and the quality of content delivered to media consumers.<sup>55</sup>
- In 2016, television remained the main source of information for 78 percent of the population, followed by the internet, radio, and print media.<sup>56</sup> The internet continued its ascent in terms of popularity, and by 2016 internet penetration rates had reached 51 percent.<sup>57</sup> While online outlets experienced a qualitative leap in public trust among consumers, the medium is not immune to battles for control among oligarchs and government officials. The competitive strategy has been to buy existing outlets and launch new ones, infesting cyberspace with bogus sites and flooding it with hired bloggers and paid online commentators.<sup>58</sup>
- There were a number of legislative changes in 2016. In March, the minister of interior prepared a new draft law to combat child pornography and terrorism. Some of its provisions granted surveillance rights to investigative authorities, including the right to block certain websites and read private emails and text messages. This so-called big brother law was considered an attack on the internet and was denounced by civil society, which asked for amendments to the legislation.<sup>59</sup> In the same month, the parliament appointed the last two individuals on the nine-member Supervising Council (SB) of the Public Broadcaster Teleradio Moldova, filling vacancies that had been open since 2013.<sup>60</sup> However, the appointment of council members remains in essence politically controlled.<sup>61</sup> In November, the parliament passed a law intended to increase transparency and facilitate journalists’ work based on a 2015 advocacy campaign by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC).<sup>62</sup> The amendments changed the registration procedure for requesting public information, shrunk the response time from 15 to 10 days, and toughened penalties for infringements by officials responsible for releasing information.<sup>63</sup>
- The current Broadcasting Code, enacted in 2006, remained outdated and bloated with amendments—104 in just 10 years.<sup>64</sup> Many argue that the parliament has failed to address this problem due to the influence of politicians who own outlets and therefore benefit from the vagueness of the situation.<sup>65</sup> In July 2016, the parliament finally voted in the first reading on a new draft code that had been pending for a year.<sup>66</sup> However, most media institutions and experts claim the new bill (drafted in 2011)

already needs to be updated because it does not deal with problems like digitization, advertising, and foreign propaganda.<sup>67</sup> At year’s end, the new code was sent to international organizations for recommendations.

- In July 2016, the parliament adopted in the first reading two draft laws to limit foreign broadcasts and broadcasts in foreign languages.<sup>68</sup> Besides already being part of the new draft of the Broadcasting Code, media experts said the proposals would result in restricting pluralism and freedom of expression, and would increase media monopolization by local oligarchs as a result of the disappearance of some TV stations from the market.<sup>69</sup> The OSCE representative on freedom of the media, Dunja Mijatović, criticized the amendments, saying it is “counterproductive to try to limit speech through excessively restrictive legislation.”<sup>70</sup>
- Moldova’s advertising market has grown over the last five years and in 2016 constituted around EUR 22 million.<sup>71</sup> Broadcasting accounts for about 55 percent of the market; but the largest advertising agency, “Casa Media Plus,” allegedly owned by Vladimir Plahotniuc,<sup>72</sup> has a monopoly on the market. In November, IJC presented recommendations for updating the legal framework, but the majority of experts doubt there is political will for reform.<sup>73</sup>
- Threats against independent journalists and media outlets returned to the sector in 2016. During the year, over 20 instances of threats were registered, several involving Jurnal TV employees. Jurnal TV host Constantin Cheianu received several text messages warning him to stop talking about “the oligarchic system in power,” and on 2 August a gunshot was fired in front of the window of his daughter’s flat.<sup>74</sup> Two weeks earlier, a Jurnal TV crew was assaulted in the Orhei town hall.<sup>75</sup> In the same period, TV 7 talk-show host Natalia Morari, renowned for criticizing the government, said she had received threats warning her about plans to silence her.<sup>76</sup>
- The 2016 presidential campaign demonstrated how the mass media fails to provide citizens with accurate information. Monitoring reports showed that most of the news published or broadcast during the election campaign contained opinions and comments rather than facts.<sup>77</sup> Media used survey data to manipulate public opinion, and television channels owned or controlled by politicians turned their newscasts into opinion programs with manipulative headlines. In the election campaign, controlled media avoided commenting on some candidates, like Maia Sandu, who in turn used grassroots and social media to promote themselves.
- Online media played an important but also flawed role in the election campaign. On the one hand, it helped mobilize people to vote. On the other, it was used as a tool of manipulation and propaganda.<sup>78</sup> Before and during the election campaign, a number of online outlets were launched with the clear purpose of distributing false and defamatory information, which then was replicated and disseminated by “mainstream” outlets. This misinformation and bad reporting primarily targeted Maia Sandu, with stories claiming that gays would vote for her,<sup>79</sup> that she had promised the EU she would accept 30,000 Syrian immigrants if she won,<sup>80</sup> or that the education reform she led as minister of education had increased the rate of suicide among children and teenagers.<sup>81</sup> Regulatory bodies in the field did not address these issues in a timely and correct manner. For example, the BCC started the monitoring process late in the campaign, overlooking serious misconduct that led to suspicions that this occurred on purpose.<sup>82</sup>

## Local Democratic Governance

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50

- The first round of elections for the Popular Assembly of the Gagauz Autonomous Region took place on 20 November 2016. Seventeen candidates won outright, including 13 independent candidates, three candidates of PSRM, and only one representative of PDM.<sup>83</sup> The second round on 4 December



brought a turnout similar to the first round at 42.2 percent. The elections represented a visible failure for the socialist party; out of the 21 PSRM candidates who were registered, only three were elected in the first round and two in the second round.<sup>84</sup> Despite the fact that only six deputies among those elected represent political parties (one from PDM and five from PSRM), civil society representatives believe that the majority of the remaining independents will promote a policy loyal to the existing pro-Russian head of the region, Irina Vlah.<sup>85</sup>

- In the presidential election, overwhelming support in Gagauzia went to PSRM's Igor Dodon, just as Irina Vlah had won the position of Baskan (Head) of Gagauzia in 2015 with PSRM backing. Thus the local elections showed that although voters in Gagauzia support usually pro-Russian candidates in nationwide elections, for the Popular Assembly they trust more local independent candidates.
- Overall, regional electoral rules are highly favorable to independent candidates as opposed to political parties. However, both party and independent candidates used similar campaign tactics as in previous elections: hardcore pro-Russian rhetoric and a push for greater autonomy from the central government. This was juxtaposed with the conflicting narrative of the rhetorically pro-EU Chișinău.<sup>86</sup>
- Several local politicians changed parties in 2016, presumably in the hope of being compensated, or potentially due to threats and blackmail.<sup>87</sup> In April, a number of locally elected officials from PLDM and Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM), including mayors and district councilors, announced their decision to join PDM.<sup>88</sup> A similar swing took place in May when mayors and district councilors from Călărași left the PLDM to join PDM.<sup>89</sup> The most recent case was Alexandru Ambros, mayor of Ungheni municipality representing PLDM, who moved to PDM in September.<sup>90</sup>
- On 4 April, Sergei Filipov, the mayor of Taraclia, was dismissed after the Cahul Appeals Court ruled against him for cutting down several dozen trees in the city square. The court applied a fine of 8,000 MDL, obliged him to recover the public damages accounting for 164,000 MDL, and ultimately deprived him of the right to hold office for two years.<sup>91</sup> Filipov claimed the ruling was PDM's revenge for his refusal to vote for Marian Lupu in the 2009 presidential elections.<sup>92</sup> The Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Moldova stated that he remained "puzzled and disappointed by a politically motivated sentence."<sup>93</sup> In August, the Supreme Court suspended the decision and Filipov was reinstated as mayor.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, this case shows the serious threats to the autonomy of local public administration in the country.
- In April, the Gagauzia assembly adopted a local Law on Education. Among its stipulations are the ability to issue locally created annexes to diplomas, a gradual move toward some classes in the Gagauz language, and introduction of an in-depth study of the history of the Gagauz people. The central Ministry of Education reacted negatively, saying that the law claimed to be legally superior to the Educational Code of the Republic of Moldova.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, the law stipulates returning to the Russian system of eleven grades, and specifies the language of education as Gagauz, Romanian, or Russian.<sup>96</sup> Since the Educational Code only names Romanian as Moldova's official language, the law could serve as a means to further enforce Russian as a key language in the region.<sup>97</sup>
- The Law on Decentralization has yet to enter into force. On 4 March, the parliament approved Law No. 2474 that allows the local public authorities (local councils) to change the dispensation of agricultural lands. In this way, local councils in Moldova would have a full mandate to enforce Article 11 of the European Charter of Local Autonomy of the Council of Europe. The law would give local governments substantially more financial autonomy and other important powers, such as the right to appeal directly to the Constitutional Court on issues of their particular concern.<sup>98</sup> In July, the government approved a strategy on the reform of public administration for the period 2016–20. The document provides mechanisms for modernizing local public institutions and creates prerequisites for sustainable development.<sup>99</sup>
- Despite being a key suspect in the billion-dollar bank fraud,<sup>100</sup> Orhei mayor Ilan Shor remained only under house arrest in 2016 and continued to manage the daily activities of the city. In March, Shor admitted<sup>101</sup> to withdrawing \$250 million from the Moldovan banking system and offering it to

politician Vlad Filat, who is currently imprisoned. Renato Usatîi also stayed in his position as mayor of Balti. Moldovan prosecutors accuse Usatîi of expropriating the majority stake held in Universalbank by a Russian banker and subsequently ordering his assassination in 2011.<sup>102</sup> In September, he left Moldova and, according to sources, took refuge in Russia.<sup>103</sup>

## Judicial Framework and Independence

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
4.50	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75	5.00

- On 4 March, the Constitutional Court ruled that citizens, rather than the parliament, should elect the president—as had been the case before 2000. While opinion polls consistently show that 80 to 90 percent of citizens prefer direct presidential elections,<sup>104</sup> the ruling spurred controversy.<sup>105</sup> The opposition had demanded direct presidential elections but said they should be enacted following a popular referendum, and had gathered close to 400,000 signatures to this effect. When the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) rejected these signatures and the court itself established the right to direct elections, it deprived the opposition of an important mobilization opportunity.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, PCRM decided to boycott the elections, arguing they were triggered by an illegal decision of the court instead of a referendum.<sup>107</sup>
- The influence of politics is perhaps the greatest challenge for Moldova’s justice system.<sup>108</sup> Instances of judges receiving disciplinary action or even criminal prosecution after criticizing the system have proved that alternative views in the judiciary are still not tolerated.<sup>109</sup> In May 2016, the Superior Council of Magistrates (SCM) lifted judge Domnica Manole’s immunity after interim general prosecutor Eduard Harunjen requested the initiation of criminal proceedings against her<sup>110</sup> for ruling in April that the CEC’s refusal to organize a constitutional referendum as petitioned by “Dignity and Truth” was illegal. The judge stated during a TV talk show that she had been intimidated and threatened.<sup>111</sup>
- Reforms included in the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform 2011–16 continued at a slow pace.<sup>112</sup> While several lower-level laws have been adopted (concerning probation, lawyers, notaries, and so on), high-level reforms have been drawn out or intentionally halted. The February adoption of the Law on the Prosecutor’s Office was one of the most significant events of 2016.<sup>113</sup> Provided that it is implemented correctly, the law could not only increase the independence and integrity of prosecutors but also the role and transparency of self-governance bodies within the general prosecutor’s office. In November, the parliament unanimously approved constitutional changes to put the new appointment procedures into effect.<sup>114</sup> According to the new procedure, the prosecutor general is appointed by the president at the proposal of the Supreme Council of Prosecutors (SCP), based on an organized contest. The president can reject the candidate proposed by the SCP only once. The mandate of the prosecutor general is nonrenewable and expires after seven years.<sup>115</sup>
- On 7 December, the SCP announced that interim prosecutor general Eduard Harunjen would be its candidate.<sup>116</sup> While Harunjen’s candidacy gained unanimous support from the SCP, civil society criticized the nontransparent procedure. Nicolae Timofti, president of Moldova at the time, signed the appointment immediately<sup>117</sup> and Harunjen took the oath the same day. The appointment was announced only thereafter in a press release, underlining the government’s refusal to cooperate with civil society on the topic. Several organizations signed a petition asking the president to make public the information about Harunjen’s integrity report.<sup>118</sup> The organizations also asked the newly appointed prosecutor general to provide a public explanation for the origins of his wealth as well as

his actions in a 2009 case in which Harunjen refused to initiate an investigation into the death of a protester during antigovernment riots.<sup>119</sup>

- A second ambitious reform, to reorganize the court system by reducing the number of courts from the current 42 to 15,<sup>120</sup> will come into force in January 2017. The law has sparked concerns over a potential violation of citizen rights by imposing the need to travel to courtrooms that are often situated outside Chişinău. In June, the government also approved a draft law on specialized prosecutors.<sup>121</sup> According to the law, two specialized prosecutor’s offices would be created: the Anticorruption Prosecutor’s Office and the Prosecutor’s Office for Fighting Organized Crime and Special Cases. Still, a number of experts believe the reform could be blocked from within.<sup>122</sup>
- The SCM was less active in 2016. Similar to previous years, the selection and evaluation of judicial candidates was highly problematic, and CSOs criticized the results of competitions to appoint and promote judges.<sup>123</sup> Many candidates had integrity issues. One judge who the media reported had disregarded the legal requirement of declaration of income and property and had failed to keep up with her caseload was nevertheless appointed to the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) in March,<sup>124</sup> ahead of more qualified candidates.<sup>125</sup> In February, the SCM reelected Mihai Poalelungi as chairman of the SCJ in a contest without any other candidates. This de facto appointment raised suspicions and revealed problems with the process itself, which does not regulate the number of applicants for a contest to be valid.<sup>126</sup>

## Corruption

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00

- During 2016, the link between corruption and political control over public institutions was underscored by the dragged-out response to the 2014 billion-dollar bank fraud, allegations of selective justice for some politicians, and pressure on the president in the appointment of the prime minister. According to opinion polls, corruption remains one of the country’s biggest problems, along with poverty,<sup>127</sup> increasing prices, and high unemployment rates.<sup>128</sup> Approximately one in three respondents said they are most concerned about corruption and that the fight against it was among the top priorities to improve people’s social and economic well-being.<sup>129</sup>
- In November, Transparency International launched the Global Corruption Barometer for 2016 accompanied by five regional surveys, including of Europe and Central Asia.<sup>130</sup> Moldovan respondents (67 percent) showed the highest level of concern out of 42 countries in the region regarding widespread corruption. Eighty-four percent considered that the government fights corruption “badly” or “fairly badly,” the second-worst result after Ukraine. Respondents said the institution most affected by corruption is the Parliament of Moldova (76 percent of respondents). The judiciary is also seen as one of the most corrupt sectors with declining public opinion and trust.<sup>131</sup> Petty corruption is widespread in education (55 percent of respondents paid a bribe), in healthcare (42 percent), and police (39 percent).<sup>132</sup>
- The “billion-dollar theft” in the banking sector that began in 2014 continued to dominate the country’s politics. In May, Orhei mayor Ilan Shor, who according to a Kroll report was the main beneficiary of the fraud, was placed under house arrest for 30 days by the National Anticorruption Center (NAC).<sup>133</sup> He was detained again in June and in August.<sup>134</sup> In June, former prime minister Vlad Filat was sentenced to nine years in prison on charges of abuse of office and corruption and banned from holding public office for five years.<sup>135</sup> This was the first case in Moldova’s history where a high-ranking official was arrested, indicted, and sentenced to prison for corruption. Both Filat and his lawyers stated that he was “the victim of an act of political revenge by Vladimir

Plahotniuc.”<sup>136</sup> The court proceedings were closed to the public<sup>137</sup> despite repeated calls from the media and civil society for an open hearing.<sup>138</sup> The judges denied the requests, saying it “would jeopardize other pending cases” under investigation at the time.<sup>139</sup>

- In August, the former vice governor of the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), Emma Tabirta, together with two NBM heads were detained by NAC<sup>140</sup> in the so-called Russian laundromat case, a complex money-laundering operation involving more than \$20 billion in Russian money.<sup>141</sup> They were charged with neglect of duty resulting in serious consequences for the banking system.<sup>142</sup> The prosecutions continued in September with the detention of 15 judges and 3 court officers.<sup>143</sup>
- In June, the parliament adopted a package of laws to reform the National Integrity Commission (NIC) and the system of wealth declarations.<sup>144</sup> The NIC was renamed the National Integrity Authority (NIA) and now has some 30 integrity inspectors who enjoy functional independence and the power to impose fines for inconsistencies in officials’ wealth declarations.<sup>145</sup> The efficiency of the NIA will depend to a large extent on the professionalism and integrity of its staff<sup>146</sup> as well as the cooperation of state institutions. According to law, the NIA has a variety of tools to fight corruption, but the main work will still be done by the NAC and the new specialized Anticorruption Prosecutor’s Office.<sup>147</sup>
- In December, the parliament registered and adopted in the first reading the draft law on the liberalization of capital and fiscal incentive (Draft law No. 452) and the draft law on amendment of certain legislative acts (Draft law No. 451).<sup>148</sup> Both draft laws were approved with unprecedented haste and in violation of legal norms related to transparency in decision-making and drafting of legislative acts. According to experts, the proposed capital amnesty could lead to the legalization of previously committed acts of corruption and the perpetuation of corrupt state servants, as the relevant state institutions will not be able to verify the origin of declared assets.<sup>149</sup> Civil society qualified these draft laws as dangerous to the entire reform of the system of integrity in the public sector, and asked for their withdrawal.<sup>150</sup>
- In recent years, the media and especially investigative outlets have been among the most important actors informing and educating the public about corruption, as well as calling on the relevant authorities in cases related to the integrity of public servants and officials. For instance, according to the 2014 activity report of the NIC,<sup>151</sup> 354 checks were initiated of which 63 were opened on the basis of information published initially in the media. In-house monitoring by journalists shows that the number of investigations and articles on corruption has increased considerably over the past year.<sup>152</sup> The new NIA, however, will no longer automatically initiate legal proceedings in response to information published by the media.<sup>153</sup> According to the new provisions, journalists will now have to refer each case to NIA, which could lead to fewer checks being initiated.<sup>154</sup>

AUTHOR: VICTOR GOTIȘAN

*Victor Gotișan is a media and political researcher. He previously worked for seven years in the Moldovan and international NGO sector. His research focuses on such issues as public media, media ownership, digitalization, media funding, and media law.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Agora.md, “Interviu cu guvernatorul BNM, Sergiu Cioclea” [Interview with NBM governor, Sergiu Cioclea], 17 November 2016, <http://agora.md/interviews/43/interviu-cu-guvernatorul-bnm--sergiu-cioclea>.

<sup>2</sup> Reuters, “Moldovan parliament appoints third PM in less than a year”, 20 January 2016, <http://in.reuters.com/article/moldova-politics-idINKCN0UY2DN>.

<sup>3</sup> Teleradio Moldova, “President rejected candidacy of Vlad Plahotniuc for the PM’s office”, 13 January 2016, <http://www.trm.md/en/politic/presedintele-timofti-respinge-candidatura-lui-vladimir-plahotniuc-la-functia-de-premier/>.

- 
- <sup>4</sup> Government of Republic of Moldova, “Foaie de parcurs privind agenda a de reforme prioritare (până la 31 iulie 2016)” [Roadmap on priority reform agenda (by 31 July 2016)], 2016, [https://gov.md/sites/default/files/foaie\\_de\\_parcurs\\_privind\\_agenda\\_de\\_reforme\\_prioritare\\_.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/foaie_de_parcurs_privind_agenda_de_reforme_prioritare_.pdf)  
[http://gov.md/sites/default/files/foaie\\_de\\_parcurs\\_privind\\_agenda\\_de\\_reforme\\_prioritare\\_.pdf](http://gov.md/sites/default/files/foaie_de_parcurs_privind_agenda_de_reforme_prioritare_.pdf).
- <sup>5</sup> Central Electoral Commission, “Comisia Electorală Centrală a totalizat rezultatele celui de-al doilea tur de scrutin prezidențial care a avut loc la 13 noiembrie 2016” [Central Election Commission summed up the results of the presidential election held on November 13, 2016], 18 November 2016, <http://cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1042&rid=18847&l=ro>.
- <sup>6</sup> Europa Libera, “Andrei Popov: „Nivelul și intensitatea întâlnirilor pe care președintele Dodon le are la Moscova sunt fără precedent pentru ultimii 9-10 ani” [Andrei Popov: “The level and intensity of meetings that President Dodon has in Moscow are unprecedented for the past 9-10 years”], 17 January 2017, <http://www.europalibera.org/a/28239938.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> Mihai Popsoi, “Russia Scores Symbolic Victory in Moldova’s Presidential Election”, 14 November 2016, <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-scores-symbolic-victory-moldovas-presidential-election/>.
- <sup>8</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “După mitropolitul Vladimir, episcopul Marchel implică din nou biserica în politică în favoarea lui Dodon, atacând-o pe Sandu” [After Metropolitan Vladimir, Bishop Marchel again involves Church in politics by endorsing Igor Dodon and questioning Maia Sandu], 4 November 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-politice/dupa-mitropolitul-vladimir-episcopul-marchel-implica-din-nou-biserica-in-politica-in-favoarea-lui-dodon-atacand-o-pe-sandu>.
- <sup>9</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometrul Opiniei Publice” [Barometer of Public Opinion], October 2016, 20 October 2016, <http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=804&parent=0>.
- <sup>10</sup> Agora.md, “Interviu cu guvernatorul BNM, Sergiu Cioclea” [Interview with the NBM governor, Sergiu Cioclea], 17 November 2016, <http://agora.md/interviews/43/interviu-cu-guvernatorul-bnm--sergiu-cioclea>.
- <sup>11</sup> Deschide.md, “Timofti promulgated those 7 laws for which the Filip Government assumed responsibility”, 4 October 2016, <https://deschide.md/en/news/political/1447/Timofti-promulgated-those-7-laws-for-which-the-Filip-Government-assumed-responsibility.htm>.
- <sup>12</sup> USnews.com, IMF approves \$180M loan to Moldova ahead of key election, 24 November 2016, <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2016-11-07/imf-approves-180m-loan-to-moldova-ahead-of-key-election>.
- <sup>13</sup> European Commission, “Full entry into force of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova”, Press release, 1 July 2016, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2368\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2368_en.htm).
- <sup>14</sup> For the whole year of 2015 Moldova did use only 1,9% from its 40000 tons of duty free quota export of apples, an even lower 1,2% quota of tomatoes, with substantially higher quota of grapes 78% and plums 61,5% but 0% used quotas for garlic and grape juice. See Mold-Street.md, “Food producers miss trade opportunities due to lack of vision”, 31 March 2016, <http://www.mold-street.com/?go=news&n=4641>.
- <sup>15</sup> European Court of Auditors, “Special Report. EU assistance for strengthening the public administration in Moldova”, 1 September 2016, p. 7, [http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16\\_13/SR\\_MOLDOVA\\_EN.pdf](http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_13/SR_MOLDOVA_EN.pdf).
- <sup>16</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s (OSCE), “Protocol of the official meeting of the permanent conference for political questions in the framework of the negotiating process on the Transnistrian settlement”, 3 June 2016, <http://www.osce.org/moldova/244656?download=true>.
- <sup>17</sup> Proiectul legii cu privire la modificarea și completarea Codului electoral nr.1381-XIII din 21.11.1997 [Draft law amending and supplementing the Electoral Code 1381-XIII of 21.11.1997], 23 June 2016, <http://parlament.md/LegislationDocument.aspx?Id=96c6e053-bde9-40c6-bf39-190d1532f3ba>.

- 
- <sup>18</sup> Radio Chisinau, “Alegeri prezidențiale 2016: Codul electoral a fost modificat” [Presidential Election 2016: Electoral Code was amended], 23 June 2016, [http://radiochisinau.md/alegeri\\_prezidentiale\\_2016\\_codul\\_electoral\\_a\\_fost\\_modificat-34877](http://radiochisinau.md/alegeri_prezidentiale_2016_codul_electoral_a_fost_modificat-34877).
- <sup>19</sup> Timpul, “Deputații au modificat Codul Electoral” [MPs amended the Elections Code], 23 June 2016, <http://www.timpul.md/articol/deputaii-au-modificat--codul-electoral--94393.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> Moldova.org, “Alegeri prezidențiale//Codul Electoral a fost modificat” [Presidential elections: Electoral code was modified], 23 June 2016, <http://www.moldova.org/alegeri-prezidentiale-codul-electoral-fost-modificat/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Promo-LEX, “Observation Mission for the Presidential Election in the Republic of Moldova on 30 October 2016. Final Report”, 26 January 2017, p. 11, [https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/raport-electoral-final-2016\\_EN\\_.pdf](https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/raport-electoral-final-2016_EN_.pdf).
- <sup>22</sup> Central Electoral Commission, “Alegerile din 30 octombrie 2016. Alegeri prezidențiale. Rezultate” [Elections from 30 October 2016. Presidential Elections. Results], <http://www.cec.md/r/procese-verbale/prezidentiale2016/>.
- <sup>23</sup> Central Electoral Commission, “Alegerile din 13 noiembrie 2016. Alegeri prezidențiale. Rezultate” [Elections from 13 November 2016. Presidential Elections. Results], <http://cec.md/r/procese-verbale/prezidentiale-t2-2016/>.
- <sup>24</sup> Realitatea.md, “Sandu, fără nicio șansă în UTA Gagauzia - Dodon a acumulat 99% din voturi. Cum s-a votat în celelalte raioane ale țării” [Sandu, with no chance in Gagauzia - Dodon gathered 99% of votes], 14 November 2016, [http://www.realitatea.md/sandu-fara-nicio-ansa-in-uta-gagauzia-dodon-a-acumulat-99prc-din-voturi-cum-s-a-votat-in-celelalte-raioane-ale-arii-foto\\_48272.html](http://www.realitatea.md/sandu-fara-nicio-ansa-in-uta-gagauzia-dodon-a-acumulat-99prc-din-voturi-cum-s-a-votat-in-celelalte-raioane-ale-arii-foto_48272.html).
- <sup>25</sup> Stefan Bejan, “Găgăuzii l-au făcut pe Dodon președinte. Lecția pe care trebuie să o învățăm” [Gagauzians made Dodon president. The lesson we must learn], 21 November 2016, <http://moldnova.eu/ro/gagauzii-l-au-facut-pe-dodon-presedinte-lectia-pe-care-trebuie-sa-o-invatam-10105.html/>.
- <sup>26</sup> Jurnal.md, “Marian Lupu se retrage din cursa prezidențială” [Marian Lupu withdraws from presidential race], 26 October 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/politic/2016/10/26/marian-lupu-se-retrage-din-cursa-prezidentiala/>.
- <sup>27</sup> Independent.md, “Mișcarea tactică a lui Plahotniuc: De ce a fost retras Marian Lupu” [Plahotniuc's tactical movement: Why was withdrawn Marian Lupu], 27 October 2016, <http://independent.md/miscarea-tactica-lui-plahotniuc-de-ce-fost-retras-marian-lupu/#.WKac8PIdaxM>.
- <sup>28</sup> Adevarul.md, “Maia Sandu, despre retragerea lui Marian Lupu în favoarea sa: Un gest disperat care confirmă faptul că Dodon este candidatul dorit de Plahotniuc!” [Maia Sandu about Marian Lupu's withdrawal in his favour: A desperate gesture confirming that the Plahotniuc desired candidate is Dodon!], 26 October 2016, [http://adevarul.ro/moldova/politica/maia-sandu-despre-retragerea-marian-lupu-favoarea-sa-gest-disperat-confirmarea-faptul-dodon-candidatul-dorit-plahotniuc-1\\_5810b5185ab6550cb8ede83b/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/moldova/politica/maia-sandu-despre-retragerea-marian-lupu-favoarea-sa-gest-disperat-confirmarea-faptul-dodon-candidatul-dorit-plahotniuc-1_5810b5185ab6550cb8ede83b/index.html).
- <sup>29</sup> Jurnal.md, “PD continues to campaign for Dodon; “District presidents oblige the teachers to vote for the PSRM candidate at presidential elections”, 10 November 2016, <http://jurnal.md/en/politic/2016/11/10/pd-continues-to-campaign-for-dodon-district-presidents-oblige-the-teachers-to-vote-for-the-psrm-candidate-at-presidential-elections/>.
- <sup>30</sup> The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), “Moldova, Presidential Election, 30 October and 13 November 2016: Final Report,” 15 February 2017, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/300016>.
- <sup>31</sup> Promo-LEX, “The conclusion of Promo-LEX’s Final Report on monitoring the presidential election: The election was competitive, partially free and was fairly well organized”, 26 January 2017, <https://promolex.md/4886-concluzia-raportului-final-promo-lex-de-monitorizare-a-scrutinului-prezidential-alegerile-au-fost-competitive-partial-libere-si-organizate-satisfacator/?lang=en>.

- 
- <sup>32</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Promo-Lex: „Există semnale că alegătorii aduși din Transnistria ar fi remunerați” [Promo-Lex “There are signs that voters brought from Transnistria were remunerated”], 13 November 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/electorala-2016/promo-lex-exista-semnale-ca-alegatorii-adusi-din-transnistria-ar-fi-remunerati>.
- <sup>33</sup> Deschide.md, “Șevciuk a fost auzit. Transnistrenii au votat masiv în turul II al alegerilor prezidențiale” [Shevchuk was heard. Transnistrians voted massively in the second round of presidential elections], 13 November 2016, <http://deschide.md/ro/stiri/politic/3169/%C8%98evciuk-a-fost-auzit-Transnistrenii-au-votat-masiv-%C3%AEn-turul-II-al-alegerilor-preziden%C8%9Biale.htm>.
- <sup>34</sup> Jurnal TV, “Aduși la vot și încurcați în declarații” [Brought to vote and with ambiguous declarations], 14 November 2016, <http://jurnaltv.md/ro/news/2016/11/15/adu-i-la-vot-i-incurca-i-in-declara-ii-10259000/#2>.
- <sup>35</sup> Rise.md, “Dead Souls: Moldova's Zombie Voters”, 15 September 2016, <https://www.occrp.org/en/blog/5644-dead-souls-moldova-s-undead-voters>.
- <sup>36</sup> The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova (CEC), “CEC s-a autosesizat pe marginea subiectului referitor la identificarea unor persoane decedate în RSA” [CEC took notice on the subject regarding the identification of deceased persons included in the State Register of Voters], 10 September 2016, <http://cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1042&rid=17664&l=ro>.
- <sup>37</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Diaspora to get more ballot papers for the second round”, 4 November 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/en/elections-2016/diaspora-to-get-more-ballot-papers-for-the-second-round>.
- <sup>38</sup> Agora.md, “Cum s-a votat în cele 11 secții de vot din diasporă unde nu au ajuns buletine” [The results from the 11 polling stations where the diaspora did not get appropriate number of ballots], 14 November 2016, <http://agora.md/stiri/24710/cum-s-a-votat-in-cele-11-sectii-de-vot-din-diaspora-unde-nu-au-ajuns-buletine>.
- <sup>39</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Diaspora expresses outrage! Many polling stations ran out of ballot papers. What experts say”, 13 November 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/en/elections-2016/diaspora-expresses-outrage-many-polling-stations-ran-out-of-ballot-papers-what-experts-say>.
- <sup>40</sup> For example, Maia Sandu submitted to the General Prosecutor's Office a criminal complaint against Alina Russu, head of the Central Election Commission, and Andrei Galbur, Minister of Foreign Affairs, because citizens living abroad who stood for hours in line at polling stations were unable to exercise their right to vote because of lack of ballots. Radio France International, „Maia Sandu, plângere penală împotriva președintelui CEC și a ministrului Afacerilor Externe” [Maia Sandu, submitted a criminal complaint against CEC President and Minister of Foreign Affairs], 21 November 2016, <http://www.rfi.ro/politica-91303-maia-sandu-plangere-penala-presedinte-cec-ministru-externe>.
- <sup>41</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Campania pentru alegerile prezidențiale, marcată de restricționarea accesului jurnaliștilor de investigație la informații” [Presidential campaign marked by restricting access to information for investigative journalists], 15 November 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/electorala-2016/campania-pentru-alegerile-prezidentiale-marcata-de-restrictionarea-accesului-jurnalistilor-de-investigatie-la-informatii>.
- <sup>42</sup> The Constitutional Court of Moldova, “Results of Presidential Election, Confirmed by the Constitutional Court of Moldova”, 13 December 2016, <http://www.constcourt.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=7&id=926&t=/Media/News/Results-of-Presidential-Election-Confirmed-by-the-Constitutional-Court-of-Moldova>.
- <sup>43</sup> State registry of non-commercial organizations, accessed 28 November 2016, <http://rson.justice.md/organizations>.

- 
- <sup>44</sup> Jurnal.md, “Referendum, REJECTED by CSJ; Supreme Court of Justice has quashed Court of Appeal decision // DOC”, 22 April 2016, <http://jurnal.md/en/justice/2016/4/22/referendum-rejected-by-csj-supreme-court-of-justice-has-quashed-court-of-appeal-decision-doc/>
- <sup>45</sup> The East Europe Foundation, “Antreprenoriatul social în Republica Moldova: Realități și perspective” [Social entrepreneurship in Moldova: Realities and Perspectives], Chisinau 2013, <https://ecorazeni.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/studiu-antreprenoriat-social-eef-1.pdf>.
- <sup>46</sup> FHI360.md, “2 Percent” Law Passed in Moldova Will Strengthen Civil Society Sustainability, 20 September 2016, <http://www.fhi360.md/index.php/en/newsroom/news-archive/518-2-percent-law-passed-in-moldova-will-strengthen-civil-society-sustainability.html>.
- <sup>47</sup> Government of Republic of Moldova, “Programul de activitate al Guvernului Republicii Moldova 2015-2018” [The Moldovan government government Action Programme 2015-2018], Chapter XVII: Civil Society, <http://www.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/program-guvernare-strelet-2015-2018.pdf>.
- <sup>48</sup> More precisely, the level of implementation of the actions assumed under the CSDS represents nearly 27%; other 9% of actions are at an advanced level of achievement, and 64% of the commitments made have not been achieved, including 52% of actions were not started. FHI 360/Moldova, “Final Evaluation Report Implementation of the Civil Society Development Strategy 2012-2015”, June 2016, <http://fhi360.md/docs/2016/MPSCS%20Raport%20Evaluarea%20SDSC%202012-2015%20Eng.pdf>.
- <sup>49</sup> Legal Resources Centre from Moldova, “Opinie: Participarea efectivă a societății civile în procesul de luare a deciziilor” [Opinion: Effective participation of civil society in decision-making process], 30 June 2016, [http://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/CRJM\\_-2016-07-07-Opinie\\_SC\\_cnp\\_fin.pdf](http://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/CRJM_-2016-07-07-Opinie_SC_cnp_fin.pdf).
- <sup>50</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometrul Opiniei Publice, Aprilie 2016” [Barometer of Public Opinion, Republic of Moldova, April, 2016], <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=773&parent=0>.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Nadine Gogu, executive director of Independent Journalism Centre from Moldova, Chisinau, 24 September 2016.
- <sup>52</sup> Mold-street, “Proprietarii televiziunilor din Moldova: Miliardari americani, afaceriști locali, bănci din Rusia și milionari de la Tiraspol” [Moldovan TV station owners: American billionaires, local businessmen, Russian banks and millionaires from Tiraspol], 14 November 2015, <https://www.mold-street.com/?go=news&n=4266>
- <sup>53</sup> Nadine Gogu, “Who really rules the airwaves in Moldova?”, 26 March 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/nadine-gogu/who-really-rules-airwaves-in-moldova>.
- <sup>54</sup> Independent Journalism Center from Moldova, “Press Freedom Report Republic of Moldova, 2015”, p. 4, <http://media-azi.md/en/press-freedom-report-republic-moldova-2015>.
- <sup>55</sup> Interview with Nadine Gogu, executive director of Independent Journalism Centre from Moldova, Chisinau, 24 September 2016.
- <sup>56</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometrul Opiniei Publice” [Barometer of Public Opinion], October 2016, 20 October 2016, <http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=804&parent=0>.
- <sup>57</sup> National Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI), “Fixed Internet and data transmissions. Situation on: 05.09.2016”, 8 September 2016, [http://en.anrceti.md/files/u1/statistica/2016/tr2/inetfix\\_tdate2016tr2en.pdf](http://en.anrceti.md/files/u1/statistica/2016/tr2/inetfix_tdate2016tr2en.pdf).
- <sup>58</sup> Victor Gotisan, “Next Target for Moldovan Politicians: Occupy the Internet”, Mediapowermonitor.com, 4 February 2016, <http://mediapowermonitor.com/content/next-target-moldovan-politicians-occupy-internet>.



- 
- <sup>59</sup> Platzforma.md, “Apel comun: Cerem excluderea mai multor articole din legea “Big Brother” [We demand the exclusion of several articles from the “Big Brother” Law], 4 April 2016, <http://www.platzforma.md/apel-comun-cerem-excluderea-mai-multor-articole-din-legea-big-brother/>; Victor Surugiu, “Legea Big Brother în Moldova: de la percheziții cibernetice pînă la verificarea poștei electronice” [Big Brother Law in Moldova: from cyber intimidations to checking e-mails], Noi.md, 11 April 2016, [http://www.noi.md/md/news\\_id/82363#close](http://www.noi.md/md/news_id/82363#close).
- <sup>60</sup> Trm.md, “Noi membri ai Consiliului de Observatori, confirmați de Parlament” [New members of the Supervisory Board confirmed by Parliament], 4 March 2016, <http://www.trm.md/ro/social/noi-membri-aii-consiliului-de-observatori-confirmați-de-parlament/>.
- <sup>61</sup> Tatiana Puiu, Victor Gotisan, “Activitatea Consiliului de Observatori al IPNA “Teleradio-Moldova”: între reforme și “stabilitate”” [The activity of the Supervisory Board of Public Service Broadcaster ‘Teleradio-Moldova’: between reforms and ‘stability’], Independent Journalism Center, Chisinau 2015, p. 39, <http://media-azi.md/ro/publicatii/activitatea-consiliului-de-observatori-al-ipna-teleradio-moldova-%C3%AEntre-reforme-%C8%99j>.
- <sup>62</sup> Media-azi.md, “Amenzi de zece ori mai mari pentru cei care vor încălca legislația cu privire la accesul la informație” [Ten Times Higher Fines for the Infringement of the Legislation on Access to Information], 17 November July 2016, <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-votat-%C3%AEn-prim%C4%83-lectur%C4%83-un-proiect-de-lege-elaborat-de-cji-care-va-%C3%AEnlesni-accesul>.
- <sup>63</sup> Media-azi.md, “Un proiect de lege elaborat de CJI, care va facilita accesul la informația de interes public, urmează să fie examinat de parlament” [A new law drafted by IJC that will facilitate access to information to be examined by Parliament], 15 March 2016, <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/un-proiect-de-lege-elaborat-de-cji-care-va-facilita-accesul-la-informa%C8%9Bia-de-interes-public>.
- <sup>64</sup> Media-Azi.md, “The BCC Proposed New Amendments To The Current Broadcasting Code. Media Expert: “I Would Compare The BCC Initiative With The Intention To Insist On Black-and-white TV When There Is Color TV”, 1 November 2016, <http://media-azi.md/en/stiri/bcc-proposed-new-amendments-current-broadcasting-code-media-expert-“i-would-compare-bcc>.
- <sup>65</sup> Victor Gotisan, “The Trials and Tribulations of the New Law on Broadcasting”, January 2017, <http://soros.md/files/publications/documents/Implementation%20of%20the%20Association%20Agreement.pdf>.
- <sup>66</sup> Jurnal.md, “Parlamentul a votat un nou Cod al Audiovizualului: Moldovenii ar putea fi obligați să achite o taxă de abonament pentru a urmări postul public de televiziune” [Parliament voted a new Broadcasting Code: Moldovans could be forced to pay subscription fee to watch public television], 1 July 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/politic/2016/7/1/parlamentul-a-votat-un-nou-cod-al-audiovizualului-moldovenii-ar-putea-fi-obligati-sa-achite-o-taxa-de-abonament-pentru-a-urmari-postul-public-de-televiziune/>.
- <sup>67</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Nicio referință la propagandă în noul Cod al Audiovizualului” [No reference to propaganda in the new Broadcasting Code], 24 March 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/social/nicio-referinta-la-propaganda-in-noul-cod-al-audiovizualului>.
- <sup>68</sup> Protv.md, “Democratii insista sa modifice urgent legea veche a audiovizualului. Proiectul promovat de PD, care instituie monopol pe piata de televiziune, a fost supus unor dezbateri publice” [Democrats insist to urgently amend the old Broadcasting Code. Amendments promoted by PD establishing monopoly on the television market subject to public debate], 15 July 2016, <http://protv.md/stiri/actualitate/democratii-insista-sa-modifice-urgent-legea-veche-a-audiovizualului---1532381.html>; Media-azi.md, “Codul audiovizualului, din nou în atenția deputaților” [Broadcasting Code again to the attention of MPs], 8 July 2016, <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/codul-audiovizualului-din-nou-%C3%AEn-aten%C8%9Bia-deputa%C8%9Bilor>.

- 
- <sup>69</sup> Radio Europa Liberă, “Cine și de ce vrea modificarea Codului Audiovizualului din Republica Moldova” [Who and why would want to amend the Broadcasting Code], 25 July 2016, <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27879641.html>.
- <sup>70</sup> OSCE, “Restrictions on foreign broadcasters in Moldova breach international standards on media freedom, OSCE Representative says”, 13 July 2016, <http://www.osce.org/fom/253346>.
- <sup>71</sup> Ion Bunduchi, Eugen Ribca, “Assessment of the Legal Framework Regulating Advertising in the Republic of Moldova and Recommendations for its Optimization”, Chisinau, September 2016, <http://media-azi.md/en/assessment-legal-framework-regulating-advertising-republic-moldova-and-recommendations-its>.
- <sup>72</sup> Rise.md, “Panama Papers: Afacerist conectat la Plahotniuc, asociat cu un fost prim-ministru” [Panama Papers: Businessman connected to Plahotniuc associated with former prime minister], 10 May 2016, <https://www.rise.md/articol/doc-afacerist-conectat-la-plahotniuc-asociat-cu-un-fost-prim-ministru/>.
- <sup>73</sup> Ion Bunduchi, media expert and executive director of Asociation of Electronic Press (APEL), Chisinau, 10 November 2016; Interview with Tatiana Puiu, media law expert, Chisinau, 13 September 2016.
- <sup>74</sup> Jurnal.md, “Jurnalistul Constantin Cheianu, amenințat din nou: „Noaptea trecută s-a împușcat în geamul apartamentului în care locuiește fiica mea” [Journalist Constantin Cheianu threatened again: “Last night a shot was fired in the window of the apartment where my daughter lives”], 2 August 2016, <http://jurnal.md/ro/social/2016/8/2/jurnalistul-constantin-cheianu-amenintat-din-nou-noaptea-trecuta-s-a-impuscat-in-geamul-apartamentului-in-care-locuieste-fiica-mea-foto/>.
- <sup>75</sup> Jurnal TV, “Jurnaliști agresați în primăria lui Shor” [Journalists threatened in Shor’s townhall], 15 July 2016, <http://www.jurnaltv.md/ro/news/2015/7/15/jurnalisti-agresati-in-primaria-lui-shor-10141497/>.
- <sup>76</sup> TV7, “Jurnalista Natalia Morari este amenințată pentru realizarea emisiunilor „Interpol”” [Journalist Natalia Morari threatened for talk-show “Interpol”], 12 July 2016, <https://www.tv7.md/ro/social/jurnalista-natalia-morari-este-amenintata-pentru-realizarea-emisiunilor-interpol/>.
- <sup>77</sup> Media-azi, “Mass-media a picat examenul la maturitate profesională în campania electorală” [The media failed the exam of professional maturity in the electoral campaign], 25 November 2016, <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/mass-media-picat-examenul-la-maturitate-profesional%C4%83-%C3%AEn-campania-electoral%C4%83>.
- <sup>78</sup> Cristian Saulea, “PR-ul politic folosit ca instrument eficient de manipulare” [Political PR used as an effective tool for manipulation], 28 November 2016, <http://mediacritica.md/ro/pr-ul-politic-folosit-ca-instrument-eficient-de-manipulare/>.
- <sup>79</sup> Media-azi.md, “Cum și de ce se implică Biserica din Moldova în politică?” [How and why the Orthodox Church from Moldova is involved in politics], 7 December 2016, <http://mediacritica.md/ro/cum-si-de-ce-se-implica-biserica-din-moldova-politica/>.
- <sup>80</sup> Actualitati.md, “Șocant! Presa: Maia Sandu le-a promis europenilor că va accepta 30 de mii de imigranți sirieni dacă va câștiga alegerile prezidențiale” [Shocking! Press: Maia Sandu promised the Europeans that she will accept 30 thousand Syrian immigrants if she wins presidential election], 24 October 2016, <http://actualitati.md/md/societate/socant-presa-maia-sandu-le-promis-europenilor-ca-va-accepta-30-de-mii-de-imigranti-sirieni>.
- <sup>81</sup> Hotnews.ro, “Igor Dodon insinueaza ca Maia Sandu este responsabila pentru sinuciderea a 400 de copii pentru ca a impus supravegherea video a bacalaureatului” [Igor Dodon insinuates that Maia Sandu is responsible for suicide of 400 children because of video surveillance that she imposed on Bacalaureate exams], 4 November 2016,

- 
- [http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-alegeri\\_moldova\\_2016-21396034-alegeri-moldova-igor-dodon-insinueaza-maia-sandu-este-responsabila-pentru-sinuciderea-400-copii-pentru-impus-supravegherea-video-bacalaureatului.htm](http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-alegeri_moldova_2016-21396034-alegeri-moldova-igor-dodon-insinueaza-maia-sandu-este-responsabila-pentru-sinuciderea-400-copii-pentru-impus-supravegherea-video-bacalaureatului.htm).
- <sup>82</sup> Association of Independent Press, “Mass-media a picat examenul la maturitatea profesională și informarea obiectivă a cetățenilor” [The media failed the exam of professional maturity and objective information of citizens], 25 November 2016, <http://api.md/news/view/ro-mass-media-a-picat-examenul-la-maturitatea-profesionala-si-informarea-obiectiva-a-cetatenilor-1383>.
- <sup>83</sup> Moldova.org, “Alegeri Găgăuzia: 17 deputați – aleși din primul tur” [Elections in Gagauzia: 17 deputies - elected in the first round], <http://www.moldova.org/alegeri-gagauzia-17-deputati-alesi-din-primul-tur/>.
- <sup>84</sup> Jurnal.md, “Second round of elections from Gagauzia: There were elected 32 out of 35 members of People's Assembly”, 5 December 2016, <http://jurnal.md/en/politic/2016/12/5/second-round-of-elections-from-gagauzia-there-were-elected-32-out-of-35-members-of-people-s-assembly/>.
- <sup>85</sup> Adevarul.ro, “Rezultatele turului doi de alegeri în Adunarea Populară a Găgăuziei” [The results of the second round of elections for the Popular Assembly of Gagauz Autonomous Region], 5 December 2016, [http://adevarul.ro/moldova/politica/rezultatele-turului-doi-alegeri-adunarea-populara-gagauziei-1\\_584573ce5ab6550cb823089c/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/moldova/politica/rezultatele-turului-doi-alegeri-adunarea-populara-gagauziei-1_584573ce5ab6550cb823089c/index.html).
- <sup>86</sup> Traditionally the Gagauz population insists on closer ties with Russia and believes they should insist more on their full independence, which they declared in August 1990. Oazu Nantoi (coordinator), “Moldova între Est și Vest: viziuni din Găgăuzia și Taraclia” [Moldova between East and West: visions from Gagauzia and Taraclia], Institute for Public Policies, Chisinau 2016, p. 54, [http://ipp.md/public/files/Publicatii/Moldova\\_est\\_est\\_vest\\_ro.pdf](http://ipp.md/public/files/Publicatii/Moldova_est_est_vest_ro.pdf).
- <sup>87</sup> Ziarul National, “Banii din bugetul de stat pentru 2016, repartizați pe criterii politice. Susținătorii PD cu buget dublu” [The money from the state budget for 2016 allocated according to political criteria. PDM members have a doubled budget], 12 June 2016, <http://ziarulnational.md/imparteala-banii-din-bugetul-de-stat-pentru-2016-repartizati-pe-criterii-politice-sustinatorii-pd-cu-buget-dublu/>; Jurnal.md, “Streleț după întrevederea cu aleșii locali: Primarii și consilierii PLDM continuă să rămână ținta unor atacuri și tentative de corupere” [Strelet after meeting with local officials: “PLDM mayors and councilors continue to be the target of attacks and tentative corruption cases], 6 February 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/politic/2016/2/6/strelet-dupa-intrevederea-cu-alesii-locali-primarii-si-consilierii-pldm-continua-sa-ramana-tinta-unor-atacuri-si-tentative-de-corupere/>.
- <sup>88</sup> Observatorul de Nord, “10 primari din Soroca s-au alăturat PDM” [10 mayors from Soroca rayon have joined Democratic Party], [https://observatorul.md/politic/2016/04/13/12513\\_10-primari-din-soroca-s-au-alaturat-pdm](https://observatorul.md/politic/2016/04/13/12513_10-primari-din-soroca-s-au-alaturat-pdm)
- <sup>89</sup> Infotag News Agency, “Mai mulți primari și consilieri din Călărași, inclusiv președintele raionului, părăsesc PLDM și aderă la PDM” [Several mayors and councilors from Calarasi rayon, including rayon president, leaving the PLDM and adheres to PDM], 27 May 2016, <http://www.infotag.md/politics-ro/224791/>.
- <sup>90</sup> Realitatea TV, “Alexandru Ambros, primarul de Ungheni, părăsește PLDM și se alătură echipei PD” [Alexandru Ambros, mayor of Ungheni city, leaves PLDM and joins PDM], 24 September 2016, [http://www.realitatea.md/alexandru-ambros-primarul-de-ungheni-parase-te-pldm-i-se-alatura-echipei-pd-motivul-anun-at-la\\_45686.html](http://www.realitatea.md/alexandru-ambros-primarul-de-ungheni-parase-te-pldm-i-se-alatura-echipei-pd-motivul-anun-at-la_45686.html).
- <sup>91</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Primarul orașului Taraclia, condamnat și demis pentru defrișarea câtorva copaci. Pirkka Tapiola: „Sunt uimit și dezamăgit”. [Mayor of Taraclia, condemned and dismissed for cutting a few trees. Pirkka Tapiola: “I am surprised and disappointed], 4 April 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/stiri/primarul-orasului-taraclia-condamnat-si-demis-pentru-defrisarea-catorva-copaci-pirkka-tapiola-sunt-uimit-si-dezamagit>
- <sup>92</sup> Jurnal.md, “Taraclia Mayor, suspended by Court of Appeal: It is a revenge of PD that I refused to vote for Lupu in 2009”, 6 April 2016, <http://jurnal.md/en/politic/2016/4/6/taraclia-mayor-suspended-by-court-of-appeal-it-is-a-revenge-of-pd-that-i-refused-to-vote-for-lupu-in-2009/>.

- 
- <sup>93</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “CSJ a anulat condamnarea primarului de Taraclia și a trimis dosarul la rejudecare” [Supreme Court of Justice cancelled the decision of conviction the Taraclia mayor and resend the case to retrial], 9 August 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-justitie/csj-a-anulat-condamnarea-primarului-de-taraclia-si-a-trimis-dosarul-la-rejudecare>.
- <sup>94</sup> Radio Free Europe, “Primarul de la Taraclia restabilit în funcție în urma deciziei Curții Supreme de Justiție” [The mayor of Taraclia re-instated in function after Supreme Court of Justice decision], 10 August 2016, <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27912932.html>.
- <sup>95</sup> Timpul, “Codul Educației din Găgăuzia, făcut în grabă și anapoda” [Education Code of Gagauzia, elaborated in a short time and wrongheaded], 17 May 2016, <http://www.timpul.md/articol/codul-educației-din-gagauzia-facut-in-graba-i-anapoda-92536.html>.
- <sup>96</sup> Ion Surdu, “De ce au avut nevoie găgăuzii de propria lege a educației” [Why the Gagauz people needed their own Education Code], 11 May 2016, <http://moldnova.eu/ro/guvern-gagauzi-legea-educatiei-1040.html/>.
- <sup>97</sup> Gagauz population remains largely unintegrated into the linguistic space of the Republic of Moldova, not speaking Romanian. Moreover, most spoken language in the public space of Gagauzia remains Russian language rather than Gagauz language. A recently conducted poll at the request of the Institute of Public Policy (IPP) among the Gagauz population revealed that: 34% of inhabitants of the region see Moldova in the future as a part of Russian Federation; 32% see Moldova a Federation having as constituent parts Transnistrian region and Gagauz region; and only 19% see the future of the country as a single unitary state. Please see more details in, Institute for Public Policy, “Studiu privind nivelul de integrare al populației din UTA Găgăuzia și raionul Taraclia în societatea din Republica Moldova” [Research study on the level of integration of the people of Gagauzia and Taraclia in Moldovan society], November – December 2015, p. 77, [http://ipp.md/public/files/Publicatii/Sondaj\\_Gagauzia\\_-\\_Taraclia\\_ro.pdf](http://ipp.md/public/files/Publicatii/Sondaj_Gagauzia_-_Taraclia_ro.pdf).
- <sup>98</sup> Abcnews.md, “OFICIAL. APL-urile vor putea sesiza CC. Șeful statului a promulgat legea” [OFFICIAL. LPAs will have the right to notify Constitutional Court. The Head of State promulgated the law], 12 April 2016, <http://abcnews.md/oficial-apl-urile-vor-putea-sesiza-cc-seful-statului-a-promulgat-legea/>.
- <sup>99</sup> Government of Republic of Moldova, “Cabinetul de miniștri a aprobat Strategia de reformare a administrației publice” [government approved the Strategy for reforming the Public Administration], 6 July 2016, <http://descentralizare.gov.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=249&id=1306&t=/EVENIMENTE/Nationale/Cabinetul-de-ministri-a-aprobat-Strategia-de-reformare-a-administratiei-publice>.
- <sup>100</sup> Please see more details on Candu.md, “Kroll, Project Tenor – Scoping Phase: Final Report”, 2 April 2015, [http://candu.md/files/doc/Kroll\\_Project%20Tenor\\_Candu\\_02.04.15.pdf](http://candu.md/files/doc/Kroll_Project%20Tenor_Candu_02.04.15.pdf).
- <sup>101</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Ilan Shor about frauds at Banca de Economii”, 25 March 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/en/cases-of-corruption/ilan-shor-about-frauds-at-banca-de-economii>.
- <sup>102</sup> Allmoldova.com, “Usatîi, învinuit de escrocherie și tentativă de omor la comandă în dosarul Gorbunțov” [Usatîi accused of extortion and attempted murder in the Gorbunțovs' case], 22 October 2016, <http://www.allmoldova.com/ro/news/usatii-invinuit-de-escrocherie-si-tentativa-de-omor-la-comanda-in-dosarul-gorbuntov>.
- <sup>103</sup> Unimedia.md, “Avocatul lui Renato Usatîi, după ce a fost emis mandatul de arest pentru 30 de zile: Nu am reușit să iau legătura cu el” [Renato Usatîi advocate after the arrest warrant issued for 30 days: We failed to get in touch with him], 24 October 2016, <http://unimedia.info/stiri/update-ultima-ora-mandat-de-arest-pe-numele-lui-usatii--primarul-de-balti--dat-in-cautare-internationala-121832.html>.
- <sup>104</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometer of Public Opinion, Republic of Moldova, November 2015,” April 2016, [http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/BOP\\_04.2016\\_prima\\_parte\\_finale-r.pdf](http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/BOP_04.2016_prima_parte_finale-r.pdf).

- 
- <sup>105</sup> Igor Botan, “Boicotarea alegerilor prezidențiale” [Boycotting presidential elections], 12 September 2016, <http://www.e-democracy.md/monitoring/politics/comments/boicotarea-alegerilor-prezidentiale/>
- <sup>106</sup> Ziarul National, “COMENTARIU // Igor Munteanu, directorul IDIS “Viitorul”, despre decizia „istorică” a CC: „Și deciziile marilor curți se discută într-un stat democratic” [Igor Munteanu, director of IDIS “Viitorul” about the CC decision: “The decisions of the Constitutional Courts could also be questioned and discussed in a democratic state”], 7 March 2016, <http://www.ziarulnational.md/comentariu-igor-munteanu-directorul-idis-viitorul-despre-decizia-istorica-a-cc-si-deciziile-marilor-curti-se-discuta-intr-un-stat-democratic/>.
- <sup>107</sup> Info Prim Neo News Agency, “PCRM nu înaintează candidatul la alegerile prezidențiale” [PCRM will not participate in the presidential elections], 3 September 2016, <http://ipn.md/ro/politica/78734>
- <sup>108</sup> Jurnal de Chisinau, “Săgeți în curtea justiției; Mai mulți magistrați au criticat dur sistemul, la Adunarea Generală a Judecătorilor: „CSM s-a transformat în arma secretă a guvernării!”, [Arrows in the court of justice; Several judges harshly criticized the judiciary at the General Assembly of Judges: „SCM became government's secret weapon], 11 March 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/justitie/2016/3/11/sageti-in-curtea-justitiei-mai-multi-magistrati-au-criticat-dur-sistemul-la-adunarea-general-a-judecatorilor-csm-s-a-transformat-in-arma-secreta-a-guvernarii>.
- <sup>109</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Dosarul cu cinci judecători între eroare, intenție și răfuială” [A case with five judges: between error, intent and revenge], 19 March 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/investigatii/dosarul-cu-cinci-judecatori-intre-eroare-intentie-si-rafuiala>.
- <sup>110</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Cum justifică autoritățile dosarul penal pe numele magistratei Domnica Manole” [How authorities justify the criminal case against judge Domnica Manole], 2 June 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/politic/cum-justifica-autoritatile-dosarul-penal-pe-numele-magistratei-domnica-manole>
- <sup>111</sup> Agora.md, “Magistrata Domnica Manole: „Am ajuns în lista neagră a judecătorilor” [Judge Domnica Manole: “I was included in the blacklist of judges”], 14 June 2016, <http://agora.md/stiri/19956/magistrata-domnica-manole-am-ajuns-in-lista-neagra-a-judecatorilor>.
- <sup>112</sup> Legea Nr. 231 din 25.11.2011 privind aprobarea Strategiei de reformă a sectorului justiției pentru anii 2011–2016 [Law No. 231 as of 25 November 2011 approving the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2011-2016], <http://lex.justice.md/md/341748/>.
- <sup>113</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Noua Lege cu privire la Procuratură a fost publicată în Monitorul Oficial” [The new Law on General Prosecutor’s Office published in the Official Journal], 25 March 2016 <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-politice/noua-lege-cu-privire-la-procuratura-a-fost-publicata-in-monitorul-oficial>.
- <sup>114</sup> Infotag News Agency, “Prosecutor general to be appointed by president – constitutional amendments”, 25 November, <http://www.infotag.md/politics-en/235579/>.
- <sup>115</sup> Jurnal.md, “Eduard Harunjen has been designated Prosecutor General; How he answers the questions about the oligarch Plahotniuc”, 7 December 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/en/justice/2016/12/7/eduard-harunjen-has-been-designated-prosecutor-general-how-he-answers-the-questions-about-the-oligarch-plahotniuc/>.
- <sup>116</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Eduard Harunjen a câștigat concursul pentru funcția de procuror general” [Eduard Harunjen won the contest for the position of Prosecutor General], 7 December 2016, <https://anticoruptie.md/ro/stiri/eduard-harunjen-a-castigat-concursul-pentru-functia-de-procuror-general>.
- <sup>117</sup> Protv.md, “In doi timpi si trei miscari, Eduard Harunjen a devenit procuror general al Republicii Moldova. Desemnat ieri candidat de catre CSP, Harunjen a depus deja juramantul” [In a flash: Eduard Harunjen became the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Moldova. Yesterday nominated by CSP, today Harunjen already took the

- 
- oath], 8 December 2016, [www.protv.md/stiri/actualitate/in-doi-timpi-si-trei-miscari-eduard-harunjen-a-devenit-procuror---1709011.html](http://www.protv.md/stiri/actualitate/in-doi-timpi-si-trei-miscari-eduard-harunjen-a-devenit-procuror---1709011.html).
- <sup>118</sup> Legal Resources Centre from Moldova, “Societatea civilă dezaproabă felul în care Eduard Harunjen a fost investit în funcția de procuror general” [Civil society disapproves the way that Eduard Harunjen was appointed as a Prosecutor General], 9 December 2016, <http://crjm.org/societatea-civila-dezaproba-felul-in-care-eduard-harunjen-a-fost-investit-in-functia-de-procuror-general/>.
- <sup>119</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Candidații la funcția de procuror general: Locuințe de lux, mașini scumpe, afaceri de familie și „păcate” iertate” [Candidates for Prosecutor General: luxury houses, expensive cars, family businesses and forgiven “sins”], 24 November 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/investigatii/candidatii-la-functia-de-procuror-general-locuinte-de-lux-masini-scumpe-afaceri-de-familie-si-pacate-iertate>.
- <sup>120</sup> Moldpres News Agency, “Legea cu privire la reorganizarea instanțelor judecătorești va fi publicată mâine în Monitorul Oficial” [Law on the reorganization of law courts will be published tomorrow in the Official Journal], 30 June 2016, <http://www.moldpres.md/news/2016/06/30/16005283>.
- <sup>121</sup> Government of Republic of Moldova, “Hotărârea pentru aprobarea proiectului de lege cu privire la procuraturile specializate” [Decision to approve the draft law on specialized prosecutors' offices], [http://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr17\\_52.pdf](http://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr17_52.pdf).
- <sup>122</sup> Moldnova.eu, “Procuraturile specializate – începutul sfârșitului pentru corupție?” [Specialized prosecutors - the beginning of the end for corruption?], 16 June 2016, <http://moldnova.eu/ro/procuraturile-specializate-inceputul-sfarsitului-pentru-coruptie-2189.html/>.
- <sup>123</sup> Ziarul National, “Societatea civilă, ÎNGRIJORATĂ de modul de numire și promovare a unor judecători” [Civil society worried about the means of appointment and promotion of judges], 8 February 2016, <http://ziarulnational.md/societatea-civila-ingrijorata-de-modul-de-numire-si-promovare-a-unor-judecatori/>.
- <sup>124</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “La CSJ, cu Porsche, casă de lux și soț cu afaceri, uitat în declarații” [To the Supreme Court of Justice with Porsche, luxury home and husband's businesses forgotten in statement], 3 March 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/investigatii/la-csj-cu-porsche-casa-de-lux-si-sot-cu-afaceri-uitat-in-declaratii>. Jurnal de Chisinau, “Concurs cu scandal: Mariana Pitic, judecătoare recunoscută vinovată de încălcarea normelor Codului de etică, propusă de către CSM spre promovare la CSJ” [Contest with scandal: Mariana Pitic, a judge found guilty of ethics code violation, proposed by the Moldovan Superior Council of Magistracy to be promoted at the SCJ], 27 January 2016, <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/justitie/2016/1/27/concurs-cu-scandal-mariana-pitic-judecatoare-recunoscuta-vinovata-de-incalcarea-normelor-codului-de-etica-propusa-de-catre-csm-spre-promovare-la-csj/>.
- <sup>125</sup> Interview with Mariana Kalughin, Vice-president of the Centre for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption, Chisinau, 21 September 2016.
- <sup>126</sup> Moldpres News Agency, “Mihai Poalelungi a fost reales președinte al Curții Supreme de Justiție” [Mihai Poalelungi re-elected as Chair of Supreme Court of Justice], 9 February 2016, <http://www.moldpres.md/news/2016/02/09/16001079>.
- <sup>127</sup> Ziarul National, “Igor Munteanu: „Corupția ca ucigaș în serie. Un președinte NU are dreptul să se teamă” [Igor Munteanu: ‘Corruption as a serial killer. A president has no right to fear’], 20 September 2016, <http://ziarulnational.md/interviu-igor-munteanu-coruptia-ca-ucigas-in-serie-un-presedinte-nu-are-dreptul-sa-se-teama/>.
- <sup>128</sup> Institute for Development and Social Initiatives “Viitorul”, “Calitatea guvernării evaluată prin prisma serviciilor acordate de stat” [The quality of governance evaluated through provided state services], National Public Survey,

- 
- Chisinau 2016, p. 22, <http://www.viitorul.org/doc.php?l=ro&idc=298&id=5340&t=/STUDII-IDIS/Sondaje-nationale/Sondaj-national-Calitatea-guvernarii-evaluata-prin-prisma-serviciilor-acordate-de-stat>.
- <sup>129</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometrul Opiniei Publice, Aprilie 2016” [Barometer of Public Opinion, Republic of Moldova, April 2016], <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=773&parent=0>.
- <sup>130</sup> Transparency International, “People and Corruption: Europe and Central Asia 2016”, 16 November 2016, <https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/7493>.
- <sup>131</sup> Institute for Public Policy, “Barometrul Opiniei Publice” [Barometer of Public Opinion], October 2016, 20 October 2016, <http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=804&parent=0>.
- <sup>132</sup> Transparency International Moldova, “Barometrul Global al Corupției 2016: guvernele din Europa și Asia Centrală eșuează la capitolul combaterea corupției” [Global Corruption Barometer 2016: Governments in Europe and Central Asia fail in fighting corruption], 16 November 2016, <http://www.transparency.md/en/news/press-releases/316-barometrul-global-al-coruptiei-2016-guvernele-din-europa-si-asia-centrala-esueaza-la-capitolul-combaterea-coruptiei>.
- <sup>133</sup> Timpul, “Ilan Shor a fost plasat în arest la domiciliu pentru 30 de zile în cazul jafului secolului” [Ilan Shor was placed under house arrest for 30 days for the ‘theft of the century’], 6 May 2016, [http://www.timpul.md/articol/\(bataie-de-joc\)-ilan-shor-a-fost-plasat-in-arest-la-domiciliu-pentru-30-de-zile-in-cazul-jafului-secolului-73870.html](http://www.timpul.md/articol/(bataie-de-joc)-ilan-shor-a-fost-plasat-in-arest-la-domiciliu-pentru-30-de-zile-in-cazul-jafului-secolului-73870.html).
- <sup>134</sup> Agora.md, “Ilan Shor a fost eliberat! Primarul de Orhei va sta în arest la domiciliu” [Ilan Shor released! Mayor of Orhei to stay under house arrest], 5 August 2016, <http://agora.md/stiri/21340/ilan-shor-a-fost-eliberat-primarul-de-orhei-va-sta-in-arest-la-domiciliu>.
- <sup>135</sup> Agora.md, “Vlad Filat a fost condamnat la 9 ani de pușcărie” [Vlad Filat sentenced to 9 years in prison], 27 June 2016, <http://agora.md/stiri/20324/vlad-filat-a-fost-condamnat-la-9-ani-de-puscarie>.
- <sup>136</sup> ProTV.md, “Dosarul Filat. O noua sedinta de judecata in cazul liderului PLDM ”[Filat’s case. A new hearing in the Liberal-Democratic leader case], 11 March 2016, <http://protv.md/stiri/actualitate/dosarul-filat-o-noua-sedinta-de-judecata-in-cazul-liderului-pldm---1384131.html>.
- <sup>137</sup> Infotag, “Procuratura Generală a declarat că ședințele de judecată în cazul Vlad Filat sunt închise la solicitarea procurorilor” [Prosecutor General's Office said the hearings of Vlad Filat case are closed at the request of prosecutors], 25 March 2016, <http://www.infotag.md/populis-ru/220845/>.
- <sup>138</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Apel: Societatea civilă cere examinarea dosarului Filat în ședințe publice” [Civil society requires examining Filat case in public hearings], 24 March 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/stiri/apel-societa-civila-cere-examinarea-dosarului-filat-in-sedinte-publice>.
- <sup>139</sup> Anticoruptie.md, “Viorel Morari, șeful Procuraturii Anticorupție: “Ședințele în dosarul lui Vlad Filat trebuie să rămână închise” [Viorel Morari, head of Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office „Vlad Filat case hearings must remain closed”], 26 May 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/stiri/viorel-morari-seful-procuraturii-anticoruptie-sedintele-in-dosarul-lui-vlad-filat-trebuie-sa-ramana-inchise>.
- <sup>140</sup> ProTV.md, “Fostul viceguvernator BNM, Emma Tabirta, și doi foști sefi de direcție ai băncii centrale, reținuți de CNA în dosarul miliardului” [Former vice-governor of NBM Tabirta Emma and two former central bank heads of direction arrested by NAC], 5 August 2016, <http://protv.md/stiri/actualitate/fost-viceguvernator-si-doi-fosti-sefi-de-directie-bnm-retinuti---1557381.html>.

- 
- <sup>141</sup> Please see more details about the Russian laundromat case on Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, “The Russian Laundromat”, 22 August 2014, <https://www.reportingproject.net/therussianlaundromat/russian-laundromat.php>.
- <sup>142</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Ema Tăbârță rămâne în arest” [Ema Tabirta remains under arrest], 11 August 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-justitie/ema-tabarta-ramane-in-arest>.
- <sup>143</sup> Unimedia.md, “Unsprezece judecători și trei executori s-au ales cu arest preventiv pentru 30 de zile”, [Eleven judges and three judicial executors were arrested for 30 days], 22 September 2016, <http://unimedia.info/stiri/update-seriviciul-de-presa-al-cna-la-moment-noua-judecatori-si-un-executor-au-fost-plasati-in-arest-pentru-30-de-zile-94683.html>.
- <sup>144</sup> Jurnal TV, “Reforma CNI, adoptată în lectură finală” [NIC reform adopted in final reading], 17 June 2016, <http://www.jurnaltv.md/ro/news/2016/6/17/reforma-cni-adoptata-in-lectura-finala-10222597/>.
- <sup>145</sup> Ziarul de Garda, “Autoritatea Națională de Integritate, fără niciun membru” [National Integrity Authority without any member], 4 August 2016, <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-justitie/autoritatea-nationala-de-integritate-fara-niciun-membru>.
- <sup>146</sup> Interview with Mariana Kalughin, Vice-president of the Centre for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption, Chisinau, 21 September 2016.
- <sup>147</sup> Interview with Lilia Ionita, anti-corruption expert, Chisinau, 23 September 2016.
- <sup>148</sup> Parliament of Republic of Moldova, “Proiectul legii privind liberalizarea capitalului și stimularea fiscală” [Draft law on the liberalization of capital and fiscal incentive], 1 December 2016, <http://parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/3503/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>.
- <sup>149</sup> Legal Resources Centre from Moldova, “The legislative initiative on tax and capital amnesty carries high risks of corruption, money laundering and tax evasion”, 19 December 2016, <http://crjm.org/en/amnistia-fiscala-si-de-capital-republica-moldova/>.
- <sup>150</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Experți: legea privind amnistia fiscală trebuie retrasă, pentru că sporește corupția” [Experts: Tax Amnesty Draft Law should be withdrawn because it will increase corruption], 20 December 2016, <http://www.europalibera.org/a/28185273.html>.
- <sup>151</sup> NIC, “Raport anual de activitate, 2014” [Annual activity report, 2014], 4 March 2015, [http://balcescucj.ro/files/documente\\_2016/documente/raport\\_scoala\\_2014-15\\_final.pdf](http://balcescucj.ro/files/documente_2016/documente/raport_scoala_2014-15_final.pdf)
- <sup>152</sup> Interview with Cornelia Cozonac, investigative journalist, Director of Centre for Investigative Journalism from Moldova, 23 September 2016.
- <sup>153</sup> Moldovacurata.md, “ANI nu se va mai autosesiza din materialele de presă referitoare la averile, conflictele de interese și incompatibilitățile funcționarilor”, 8 March 2016, <http://www.moldovacurata.md/news/view/ani-nu-se-va-mai-autosesiza-din-materialele-de-presa-referitoare-la-averile-conflictele-de-interese-si-incompatibilitatile-functionarilor>.
- <sup>154</sup> Interview with Mariana Kalughin, Vice-president of the Centre for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption, Chisinau, 21 September 2016.